Saskatchewan
Environment

A Summary of Informal Discussions

to Develop a Green Strategy Framework

Summer/Fall 2004

Saskatchewan Centennial 2005

Environment and Economy -
building the future together

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Goals and Objectives 1

Approach 2

Results 2

Summary of Common Themes 3

Long Term Vision 3
Reduce Environmental Footprint 3
Green Economy 3
Government to Lead by Example 4
Education and Behaviour Change 4
Innovation and Diversification 4
Sustainable Communities 5
Regulatory Reform 5

Summary of Sectoral Comments 6

Municipal Government 6
First Nations 7
Youth 8
Business and Industry 10
Conservation and Protection 12
Rural and Agriculture 14
Science and Technology 16
Sustainable Communities 17

Introduction

In April 2004, Saskatchewan Environment (SE) was directed to lead development of a government-wide Green Strategy. In order to gain insight into what Saskatchewan residents feel would be an appropriate approach, SE was given approval by Cabinet to engage stakeholder groups in informal discussions prior to developing the Strategy. The Green Strategy is intended to establish the framework for a government-wide commitment to improved environmental management as part of a green and prosperous economy.

Building on the understanding that effective environmental management needs to be led by more than one department, SE along with other key departments, engaged various parties in dialogue. The intent was to build commitment to a greener and more prosperous province and to hear their thoughts for opportunities in this regard. Determining the level of stakeholder support for this initiative and hearing their perspectives of both the issues and opportunities related to balancing economic growth with the desire to maintain a healthy environment was seen as integral to effective Strategy development.

Goals and Objectives

The goals for external engagement were to:

- solicit input from a variety of sectors and use this information in conjunction with internal staff expertise and applied research in order to develop a draft Framework for formal consultation
- understand stakeholder expectations of and potential opportunities for a green and prosperous province and to build support for this initiative
- identify possible linkages to other "Green" initiatives, both within and external to government and ensure this initiative complements the Energy Strategy, Economic Plan and Climate Change Strategy

Approach

A green and prosperous province must be considered in the context of a broader and more pluralistic approach; one that addresses economic, social and ecological dimensions of sustainable development within a genuinely participatory approach. Based on this principle, SE focused discussions on the institutional context of a greener and more prosperous economy in order to capture highly diverse participant values, priorities and responses.

It was determined the best way to generate open discussion and begin building commitment for shared responsibility for environmental protection was to hold discussions sectorally. The focus was on discussing the integration of economic and environmental considerations with specific sectors, rather than engaging a cross section of sectors in discussion or debates. Other provincial government departments were invited to participate when they had an interest in the particular sector.

Sectors targeted for input included: municipal government, Aboriginal, youth, business and industry, environmental protection and conservation, agriculture and rural, sustainable communities and science and technology. Umbrella organizations were given priority in order to benefit from economy of scale, and other parties with a significant interest in the issue were also invited to participate.

A variety of approaches were used to engage folks, including: questionnaires, workshops, meetings and formal presentations. Although the approach varied according to the particular group, the information that SE tried to obtain centered on the following questions:

1. What is your vision of a sustainable future?
2. Is the integration of environmental stewardship and economic prosperity a worthwhile pursuit, if so, what are the most important considerations and why?
3. In your experience, what opportunities exist in Saskatchewan to pursue a green and prosperous economy? What unique opportunities does this province have in order to position itself as a leader in this regard?
4. What best-practice examples exist and should be promoted? For example: innovations in technology, economic instruments, regulatory reforms, demonstration projects, etc.
5. What suggestions would you have for your organization or other groups/sectors to assist in advancing a green and prosperous economy?
6. What research and development is needed to ensure better and more integrated economic, social, and environmental outcomes?
7. How can this initiative be implemented to achieve long lasting commitment and success?

Results

SE met with over 70 external organizations and businesses during the summer and fall of 2004. The message heard is that residents of Saskatchewan welcome the opportunity to share in development of a strategy to develop a green and prosperous province. There is also significant appreciation for being engaged early in the process, before departments have formalized their proposals. None of those consulted considered the concept to be irrelevant or unimportant, but there were some significant insights into how to move this forward. The suggestions we heard from these various groups are quite consistent with the best practices in place in other jurisdictions.

This summary is intended to capture the common themes heard throughout the meetings as well as provide a sectoral summary of interests and opportunities expressed during the meetings. A list of organizations and meeting dates is provided at the beginning of each sectoral summary and a complete summary of each meeting can be obtained by contacting the Green Policy Section in SE at 787-6187.

Summary of Common Themes

A number of reoccurring themes were heard during the discussions. These themes were expressed by different sectors and provide common ground from which to consider priorities for the Green Strategy.

Long Term Vision

Environmental, community and business groups recognize the need to integrate environmental and economic considerations. They also recognize there are social and human health benefits to be realized from working toward a sustainable future. Groups consistently recommended the need for a vision of sustainability that reflects Saskatchewan values and that this vision would provide a common direction for Saskatchewan people to collectively work toward in order to achieve a greener and more prosperous economy. There was also agreement that incremental change is the best approach and that this change will take a number of years, therefore it is appropriate to set long-term goals and put in place immediate actions to move Saskatchewan toward these goals.

Groups also want to have a clear understanding of the current environmental situation and have it in a format that compares how Saskatchewan is doing relative to our neighbours and to the rest of Canada. It is expected that this environmental picture will help determine the focus of and opportunities for a Green Strategy.

Reduce Environmental Footprint

Saskatchewan people told us they value their environment, especially clean water, clean air and pristine natural areas and that more work is needed to protect these resources. There is growing understanding that a productive and healthy environment is fundamental to human health, a healthy society and a healthy economy. Agricultural associations and others believe when society as a whole benefits from protecting the environment that society should help pay for that protection (water was a common example).

There is support across all sectors for place-based planning approaches. The public recognizes this approach will take additional resources, but expect government to provide those resources in order to realize better decisions from integrating environmental, social and economic considerations. The Chamber of Commerce, EcoNet and communities expressed a need to maintain strong enforcement capabilities for those who fail to comply with environmental protection legislation.

People relate a healthy environment to healthy people and healthy lifestyles. The health items heard most often were clean water and reduced pesticide use. In fact protection and/or conservation of water was highlighted at almost every meeting. Participants also note an obvious link with climate change initiatives and support initiatives designed to reduce the effects of climate change.

Green Economy

Environmental organizations outlined that those jurisdictions with a healthy economy can afford to improve their environment and that by maintaining a vibrant economy it affords opportunities for faster environmental progress. Business and industry also support a green economic focus and agree there may be opportunities to increase competitiveness by adopting green business practices but indicate it is imperative that they are able to remain competitive with their neighbours. They note there are environmental regulations in every jurisdiction and see protecting the environment as a worthy goal to be pursued. A CFIB poll of its members found that 85.5 per cent of members believe sustainable development practices make it possible to grow the economy and to protect the environment at the same time. Another 12.1 per cent think that the environment should have priority even at the risk of curbing economic growth.

Industry, community and environmental groups expressed support to diversify our economy with value-added resource opportunities. Some examples included waste management, recycling, community based value-added initiatives, tourism, agro forestry and organic farming. EcoNet members were particularly supportive of an Eco-label program that could profile 'green' Saskatchewan products. All sectors noted that government could do more to support progress towards the implementation of a greener and more diversified economy. Suggestions often focused around providing incentives to encourage diversification and seeking economies of scale whenever appropriate (example: SPMC purchase for municipalities).

Government to Lead by Example
Many groups noted that the economy of Saskatchewan is significantly influenced by the actions of government therefore it is important that the actions of the government build the foundation for progress by leading by example. This extends from improving regulatory and approval processes to implementing a green procurement policy and green building codes and converting some of its vehicle fleet to be as energy efficient as possible. COSFI and others noted a need for integrated policies across all governments.

All groups noted there must be a coordinated approach across government in order to ensure a greener and more prosperous economy. SPIGEC and EcoNet noted government must comply with standards, conduct audits and report their results to the people of Saskatchewan. Further, both communities and EcoNet noted the need for the principles of full cost accounting to be adopted in decision making.

Education and Behaviour Change
Many participants including students, academics, business people and environmentalists highlighted the need for better public education around what the impacts of an individual's actions are and how they can be a part of the solution. There is general agreement that there is a lack of sufficient knowledge and understanding of sustainable development concepts. Also, a lack of accessible information and gaps in terms of translating information that does exist into material that can be used to facilitate the debate and understanding of the intersect of environmental and economic issues. Agricultural associations, communities and youth suggest starting public education at the grass roots by outlining what is sustainable and describing the benefits of operating/behaving in this way. Tourism operators noted a sustainable tourist industry is an excellent way to profile how to practice sustainable ways of living. Tourism operators interact within local communities, can communicate how to operate sustainably and can demonstrate the benefits.

In addition to education, there is support for government to encourage, rather than regulate, behaviour change whenever possible. Some of the possible approaches we heard include: a variety of taxation programs encouraging energy efficient products, better information management, environmental farm plans, demonstration projects, trade shows, rebate programs and profiling successful projects that contribute to the goal of a greener and more prosperous economy. Along this line, communities and agricultural associations support rewarding those who have adopted sustainable practices rather than always funding/rehabilitating degraded areas. Both SARM and the Provincial Youth Advisory Council suggested the Crowns could play a role with funding and PYAC mentioned Crowns could also communicate the message of sustainability. COSFI suggested a Premier's Award of Excellence to recognize and encourage environmental achievement by business

EcoNet members were critical of limited efforts to monitor and report the state of the environment and highlighted the need for government to do more monitoring and reporting in order to assess progress and adapt policies and actions. First Nations said government must be accountable for damage to the environment. Industry also noted monitoring and reporting is part of government's responsibility for 'managing the commons' and highlighted there is need for clear, accessible information in order to make good business decisions.

Innovation and Diversification
Innovation is seen as another key element to becoming a greener and more prosperous province. Focusing on green research and development can provide opportunities to diversify and build a thriving economy. APEGS and others noted a general need exists to maintain a strong research capacity in our universities and with SRC in order to maintain a Saskatchewan advantage for new opportunities.

There are many existing initiatives and participants recognized the advantage of government establishing/supporting a center of excellence to help build synergies that would lead to progress for Saskatchewan. There were suggestions for a Centre of Innovation/Excellence that would focus on sustainable development as well as a request to work with FSIN for an Aboriginal Centre of Environmental Excellence. In both cases, groups expressed a need to maintain close linkages with industry in order to ensure the new technologies can help develop our commercial industry. We also heard there is support for government funded pilot projects to make Saskatchewan entrepreneurs and the public aware of potential opportunities and new technologies.

There is wide support to develop green energy technology and we heard Saskatchewan should work with those technologies in which we have a natural advantage including those which would be value added to the uranium industry.

The need for better waste management was profiled at almost every meeting. From general support for an enhanced regional waste management system to environmental groups suggesting the goal should not be waste minimization, but rather zero waste. There is support to find innovative ways to solve concerns such as this and, when solutions are found, beneficial management practices should be published so that others can benefit from progress.

Sustainable Communities

Urban and agricultural communities, where most of the population lives and where the major effects on ecosystems are generated, do not have sufficient tools to promote sustainable environments and infrastructures. There are many ongoing community initiatives and there is support for innovative pilot programs leading toward sustainable communities but these programs should compliment Communities of Tomorrow efforts.

Regulatory Reform

Agriculture groups, SARM, Chamber of Commerce and petroleum industry representatives indicated the current regulatory regime is too process oriented and is seen to be an impediment to economic growth. EcoNet and Communities noted regulatory reform will be required to enable some of the sustainable development opportunities.

Another concern noted by industry is there is a need to confirm roles and responsibilities for all parties in the regulatory and environmental assessment process. Industry provided a number of examples that showed that even after companies had expended considerable resources, projects were not approved by municipal officials at the last minute. They want clear environmental standards that, when met, provide approval to develop/operate. SARM suggested that perhaps municipal officials could review projects in advance of an environmental assessment.

The Canadian Federation of Business, Chamber of Commerce, COSFI, agricultural associations, EcoNet and others indicated there needs to be better coordination of efforts between different levels of government and across the provincial government. Business told us they desire a level playing field, clear standards that aren't constantly changing, a transparent and timely approval process and, if possible, a one-window approach. Additionally, there is growing concern that the agriculture industry does not have to meet the same environmental standards that other industries are required to meet.

Communities and SUMA were adamant that government needs to improve The Planning and Development Act in order to allow communities to allocate resources to priorities such as planning for sustainable development. SARM and agricultural associations indicate The Labour Act should be reviewed and renewed.

The concept of a new environmental management model similar to that proposed by CCME and the Ministry of Environment is supported. Participants noted regulatory changes will be necessary to facilitate opportunities that can arise from more efficient business practices.

Summary of Sectoral Comments

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

SE and Government Relations (GRAA) met with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) Board of Directors on August 17, 2004 and the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) Executive Committee on August 31, 2004.

What we heard:

- provincial government can do a lot on its own, including: reducing regulation and eliminating regulation that impedes progress on the 'green' front (example: Ducks Unlimited restriction on acres purchased), reducing delays in government approval processes and ensuring the Green Strategy compliments other provincial Strategies as well as the Federal New Deal (SUMA)
- support for a balanced approach: take care of the environment but not at loss of competitiveness (SARM)
- need awareness of where we want to get as a society and subsequent public education to alter behaviour to get us to that point (SUMA) what is good environmental practice? Folks don't know (SARM)
- regulations need to be common sense and performance-based: government's role is to set standards (don't change them all the time) then audit performance (SARM)
- need one stop shopping for regulatory approvals (SARM)
- incentives are preferred to regulation and perhaps the Crowns can help make it affordable (SARM)

Opportunities include:

- provide funding to develop green spaces in urban areas (SUMA)
- expand/improve the regional waste management program (SUMA); want regional landfills and support expanded recycling (SARM)
- use money from current recycling programs to assist with small landfill cleanup (SARM)
- change labour rules (SARM)

ABORIGINAL

First Nations

SE, GRAA and Saskatchewan Industry and Resources (SIR) held three meetings with First Nations representatives. The first was with members of Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) Lands and Resources Secretariat on July 21, 2004, followed by a meeting with both the FSIN Economic and Community Development Secretariat and the Lands and Resources Secretariat on August 10, 2004. The third meeting was coordinated with FSIN to engage First Nations leaders in a workshop on October 6, 2004.

What we heard:

- we have to protect resources for future generations while developing long term economic initiatives that are consistent with the precautionary principle
- government must be accountable for damage to the environment
- a full partnership with First Nations at the planning stage is critical
- strive for attitude change over the long-term with short term goals to make progress
- wealth that is generated from natural resources must be shared with First Nations so that they may share in managing the environment
- protect water
- traditional knowledge must be treated equally with western knowledge and financial benefits derived from that knowledge (such as new medicine) should return to First Nations people
- would like to see an end to game farming, hunt farms and pesticide use, remove cows from parks and improve uranium tailings management/laws to better protect the environment

Opportunities include:

- develop a First Nations Centre of Environmental Excellence
- develop an ecotourism strategy for the province; Aboriginal involvement is key
- develop a Traditional Lands Act that would require developers to investigate traditional land use and where these uses occurred, meet certain development requirements intended to protect First Nations traditional economy
- encourage value-added forest product initiatives
- First Nations Green Plan that complements the Green Strategy
- Develop a Commemorative Park in southwestern Saskatchewan

YOUTH

SE engaged Saskatchewan youth in a variety of ways. Students in the Leadership 300 (L300) class at the University of Regina researched and provided analysis and recommendations related to five environmental topics. SE presented and participated on September 29, 2004 at the Youth Forum on Sustainability, a session with Future Leaders of the Regina Economic Development Authority (Future Leaders) was held on SE's behalf to discuss sustainable development, and SE has been working with officials at Culture, Youth and Recreation (CYR) to engage members of the Provincial Youth Advisory Committee (PYAC) via a questionnaire.

What we heard:

- integration of environmental stewardship and economic prosperity is the only option that makes sense over the long term; the sooner the two sides are in sync, the sooner society will benefit (PYAC)
- a cultural shift is required to move away from the 'keeping up with the Jones' mentality and this level of change must resonate with an individual's motivations. This may require the use of rewards/incentives, regulation and taxation changes etc. until sustainable practices become common (Future Leaders)
- we need to manage our resources in a manner that is economically productive for both the present and the future, especially those resources that can provide secondary benefits (water and forests provide huge benefits, but only if managed properly and they also contribute substantially to the secondary economic benefits from tourism) (PYAC)
- focus on the long term benefits and consequences of decisions we make today and provide easy access to information to help people understand the environmental consequences of their actions/decisions (PYAC)
- sustainability cannot be achieved by technology advances alone, this change requires significant leadership by government (Future Leaders)
- secure buy-in of all stakeholders and develop a solid communication plan of long term benefits of a sustainable province in order to encourage individuals to make the shift (PYAC)
- make sure education starts early and keeps on going. Perhaps our Crown corporations could communicate the message of sustainability to Saskatchewan residents (PYAC)
- provide proponents with the resources to solve their regulatory problems rather than just enforcing laws (e.g.: manure management) (PYAC)
- using our resources for tourism creates prosperity with little impact to the environment (PYAC)
- create secondary processing opportunities to create jobs (PYAC)
- unique opportunities cost $$ in research, development and start up costs. Does our economic reality support this kind of policy choice? (PYAC)
- overall, we need to develop a "sustainable living mindset" (PYAC)

Opportunities include:

- invest in alternative energy sources such as biodiesel, nuclear, wind and hydrogen power (PYAC). Invest in renewable energy sources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (L300)
- reduce the negative effects of chemical farming by moving towards sustainable farming through integrated pest management, organic farming and the establishment of a local market system (L300)
- develop agricultural initiatives such as: agroforestry, support for environmental farm planning, irrigation development, organic beef and specialty meats (PYAC)
- develop a provincial model (the first in North America) to eliminate waste in our society (L300)
- enact stronger pollution and littering laws (PYAC)
- support for mandatory recycling, durable-expandable-re-usable products, organic fertilizers, incentives tied to the use of renewable resources and zero-emission technologies (Future Leaders)
- create and fund an independent body whose mandate is to develop a Genuine Progress Index for the purpose of measuring Saskatchewan's well-being (L300)
- support accommodation and road infrastructure to benefit from tourism opportunities (PYAC)
- offer economic incentives to improve home and business energy efficiency (PYAC)
- develop new emissions-reducing transportation policies (L300)
- government needs to invest in infrastructure and support research into sustainable practices; non-profit organizations need to focus on developing awareness of the importance of sustainability; business and industry need to continue to look for economic opportunities that can be sustained over the long-term; communities need to be innovative and proactive in recognizing their role in the bigger picture (PYAC)
- undertake an "Eco-Community Campaign" geared at promoting environmental awareness among the residents of Saskatchewan (L300)
- include environmental accounting into pricing via taxation, regulatory barriers, incentives, etc. to encourage green industry growth and to provide society the benefits green industry can bring (PYAC)

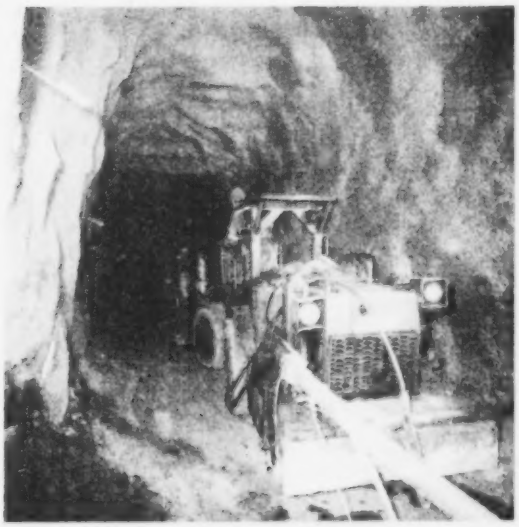
BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

SE met with the Saskatchewan Petroleum Industry Government Employees Committee (SPIGEC) on July 27, 2004, with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) on August 18, 2004, with Regina Regional Economic Development Authority (RREDA) on August 18, 2004 and with various tourism operators (TO) during November. Also SIR joined SE to meet with the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce (COC) Environment Committee and the Saskatchewan Mining Association (SMA) on June 15, 2004 and with Council of Saskatchewan Forest Industries (COSFI) on November 4, 2004. Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation and SE met with the Saskatchewan Construction Association (SCA) on December 15, 2004. The Saskatchewan Environmental Industry and Managers Association (SIEMA) and the Association of Professional Engineers and Geophysicists of Saskatchewan (APEGS) were invited to participate via a questionnaire.

What we heard:

- need to ensure we maintain competitiveness with other jurisdictions and maintain a level regulatory playing field within Saskatchewan (COC) (SPIGEC) (CFIB) (SMA) (SCA)
- a green and prosperous strategy can become a competitive advantage(RREDA) (TO)
- an environmental scan is needed in order to determine where to focus energies (SPIGEC)
- there is no reason, with appropriate design and planning, that environmental stewardship and economic prosperity need to be in conflict (APEGS) (TO)
- while environmental regulatory approaches could have positive impacts on small and medium sized businesses, all too often they trigger negative effects because they are not designed specifically for the small business community (CFIB)
- poll CFIB of its members found that 85.5 per cent of members believe sustainable development practices make it possible to grow the economy and to protect the environment at the same time and another 12.1 per cent think that the environment should have priority even at the risk of curbing economic growth (only 1.4 per cent of businesses consider that economic growth should be given priority even if the environment has to suffer to some extent) (CFIB)
- while business and industry are very willing to make reasonable efforts to support green efforts, they tend to become concerned when regulations block valid opportunities because of apparent impacts rather than real damages; at present, projects are subject to what appears to the outsiders as arbitrary review processes with poorly defined criteria and substantial costs before a decision is offered - it is difficult to make investments in this environment (APEGS)
- need to reduce duplication by regulatory agencies (federal/provincial/municipal); a one-window approach is preferred and the provincial government is the preferred contact (SPIGEC) (COC) (COSFI)
- the existing environmental management model is outdated. Consistent performance-based standards, rather than prescriptive laws are required. (suggest the National Building Code is a good model (COC) Joint undertaking toward a new environmental management model is a good idea (CFIB)(
- small and medium sized enterprises expressed concern that they don't have the resources (information and capital) to develop performance based plans or an environmental management system (SPIGEC); it may be workable by providing a lot of information (COC)
- concern that government won't be able to determine/measure success for performance-based objectives, may be better off to collectively set standards but let industry participate in a way that leads to innovation (SPIGEC) and represents industry perspectives (SCA)
- government will have to comply with standards and conduct internal audits to demonstrate leadership in order to convince industry this is the way to go (SPIGEC)
- recognition of the importance of and the need for regulation and strong enforcement capabilities for those who refuse to comply (COC)
- government needs to provide quality information that allows industry to make informed decisions (COC) (SPIGEC)

- ecototourism is a valid concept, but the market is a small niche sector; a broader sustainable tourism strategy that encompasses all sectors of the tourism industry is a better approach (TO)
- CFIB poll found that water quality is by far the predominant environmental concern (88.0 per cent) and that handling and storage of toxic waste comes second (68.5 per cent), preservation of forests is third (65.1 per cent) and fourth is air pollution in cities (64.4 per cent) (CFIB)
- look for opportunities to go beyond selling raw materials. Generate processing that creates real wealth, jobs and prosperity that can finance environmental initiatives. The challenge is to carry forward these opportunities in an environmentally sustainable fashion- there are also opportunities in areas like eco-tourism that are underutilized (APEGS) and there is a need to do a much better job of promoting tourism in Saskatchewan (TO)
- sustainable tourism businesses can communicate the message of sustainability to Saskatchewan residents (TO)
- a general need exists to maintain a strong research capacity, primarily in our universities and public enterprises like the SRC. Support of private and NGO efforts is also needed (APEGS)



Opportunities include:

- need to define roles and responsibilities for government, industry and local people; there is particular concern about local approvals and assessments (SPIGEC) (COC)
- ensure policies are integrated across all governments (COSFI)
- develop a new environmental management model that includes a one window approach, consistent and universal standards and broadens the suite of compliance tools to include consistent performance-based standards, (COC) (CFIB) (SPIGEC)
- develop a sustainable tourism strategy that will set Saskatchewan apart from other provinces and develop a leading edge web site with extensive information and links to opportunities by region and by sector (TO)
- recognize and reward development proponents that go beyond simple compliance with the basic rules through financial and other types of recognition (APEGS)
- support cogeneration and biomass projects (COSFI)
- government should develop an improved data base and 'manage for the commons'; i.e.: Study and report on cumulative effects, monitor compliance and provide improved information to industry and public via a principle of continuous education (COC) (SPIGEC)
- Premier's Award of Excellence to recognize environmental achievements by business (COSFI)
- develop a Centre of Environmental Excellence (RREDA)
- change workers compensation to provide for those businesses that have higher claims to pay higher premiums (CFIB)

CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION

SE met with the Parks and Land Use Committee of Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA) on September 7, 2004 and SE and SIR met with representatives of a number of member organizations within EcoNet on July 15, 2004, including the Saskatchewan Nature and Ecotourism Association (SNEA). EcoNet is comprised of about 45 ENGOs of which 14 were present for our consultation

---

What we heard:

- healthy stewardship is everyone's responsibility. If you don't have a healthy environment the economic opportunities are reduced and they will be less diversified (EcoNet)
- need a vision of where we want to get to, along with long term actions supported by short term government investment: the plan must incorporate timelines and actions (EcoNet)
- this must also be a green environment initiative (EcoNet)
- an environmental scan is important (EcoNet) there is little or no data from monitoring; monitoring and reporting are essential in order to assess progress and adapt policies and action (EcoNet)
- government needs to be a leader and build credibility with transparent action and decision making (SPRA)
- the provincial auditor must be involved to ensure that government departments adhere to the principles (EcoNet)
- coordination and cooperation between provincial government departments responsible for environment, agriculture, economic development and tourism must begin at a high level and be maintained through the rank and file of the public service (SNEA)
- ensure there are partnerships with federal government and municipalities (EcoNet)
- enforcement is key to protecting our natural resources (EcoNet)
- true environmental stewardship needs the 'precautionary principle' and it needs to be applied (EcoNet)
- a round table (such as NRTEE) is needed to build long-term commitment (SPRA): bring together sectors to talk about a sustainable community (EcoNet)
- do the 'no brainers' first - gain credibility, grow commitment, show the direction the policy will be heading, implement government policies that demonstrate action (e.g.: green procurement policy) (SPRA)
- full cost accounting is important (EcoNet) don't use one resource to the detriment of another (such as grazing in forests) (EcoNet)
- government needs to provide more information: clear transparent data (SPRA)
- we have a good image of clean environment and lets use this to build secondary value-added jobs (EcoNet)
- land-use management policies and practices on Crown land both in the provincial forests and land administered by Saskatchewan Agriculture must recognize nature-based tourism and ecotourism as legitimate and viable activities which make a positive contribution to the lifestyles and economic well-being of the people of Saskatchewan (SNEA)
- need to have society pay for those services that benefit all (e.g.: society rather than just farmers should pay for riparian protection) (EcoNet)
- ecotourism and sustainable nature-based tourism can be useful tools in helping to protect ecological sustainability and conservation of natural environments and cultural heritage (SNEA) tourism is a priority (SPRA)(EcoNet)
- protecting the environment equals protecting health (EcoNet)
- nature itself has intrinsic value (EcoNet)
- educate economists about the environment and educate environmentalists about the economy and taxation (EcoNet)
- legislative reform to support the policy will be required (SPRA) (EcoNet)
- ensure a full environmental and human health impact assessment for sensitive and important areas (EcoNet)
- need to establish measures for how we are doing; footprint measure, GPI (EcoNet)

- ENGOs can be involved in the identification of areas for protection, monitoring RANs, conducting the process of certification, approving applications, etc (EcoNet)

Opportunities include:

- link stewardship with environmental certification logos for 'green' products and promote 'local' products as part of 'Saskatchewan green' (EcoNet)
- community-based value-added initiatives (e.g.: furniture, ecotourism, services, etc) not the same as the traditional government supported initiatives which have proved to be largely unsuccessful and unsustainable
- hold an annual conference to bring groups together to share ideas (SPRA)
- institute a green procurement policy (SPRA) (EcoNet)
- develop a help line service to provide information about how to do things more beneficial to the environment (e.g.: native plants, zeroscaping) (EcoNet)
- promote environmental/ecotourism (EcoNet): initiate a policy where only accredited operators can operate on Crown Land (SNEA)
- educate and partner with schools to incorporate water chemistry lessons, promotion of stewardship. Use schools as economic-environmental incubators- start at grade 1 and 2 (SPRA)
- educate and train a workforce to have in-depth, first hand knowledge and experience of Saskatchewan land and waterscapes. Support the Certificate of Ecological Education (U of S) and Ecotourism Certificate Programs at SIAST (SNEA)
- create standards that account for the privilege of using/accessing a resource (EcoNet)
- *improve sewage disposal (*including septic tanks) and waste management (SPRA); should think about elimination of waste rather than waste management and recyclying (EcoNet)
- need a water and power rate system that encourages conservation (SPRA)
- alternative energy options should include: cogeneration, assistance for geothermal (wind- won't cut it) (SPRA) plus solar and wind (EcoNet)
- energy retrofit programs (EcoNet)
- adopting urban and housing designs that include winter city design concepts could conserve energy and minimize weather related problems (SPRA); urban planning (support bikes) (EcoNet)
- develop water management, conservation and water stewardship programs (EcoNet)
- model/pilot projects including: sustainable farm projects, Craik project: try a few and ripple effect (EcoNet)
- develop organic/pest free agriculture and gardening programs (EcoNet)

RURAL AND AGRICULTURE

SE met with the Executive Committee of the Action Committee on Rural Economy (ACRE) on August 6, 2004 and along with SAFRR met on August 25, 2004 with 11 agricultural organizations (AA); including livestock and grain producer and processor associations, Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association, Organic Directorate, National Farmers Union, Ag West Bio and the Agriculture Producers Association of Saskatchewan.

What we heard:

- protection of the environment is very important, the economy cannot preclude the environment (AA)
- we need a long-term vision and plan for business - define government goals and principles and then work with NGOs and industry to work toward meeting these objectives on an incremental basis (AA)
- need to be competitive with our neighbours
- need to change the way people behave; start at the grass roots with public education about what is sustainable and the benefits of operating this way (AA)
- prior to investing dollars and before we develop the industry, we need to understand what the market means as "green" (market analysis) (AA)
- we don't want to end up with the problems such as those in Europe or Texas; we don't have the economic base to fix problems like those (AA)
- farming community needs to be informed - need more understanding to properly debate issues (AA)
- absolutely important that we acknowledge and provide rewards for those who have maintained healthy habitat; reward producers that are doing the right thing rather than focusing on those that do badly (AA)
- there needs to be a link between sustainability and marketability (AA)
- there is a disconnect between producer and consumer - but producer doesn't talk directly with consumer; need to build partnerships (AA)
- how do we make things cost competitive? (AA)
- seek economic incentives for efficiencies. These will lead to retention of beneficial management practices for the longer-term, rather than using incentives that will change practices only until the money dries up (sustainable approach) (AA); incentives don't always have to be money (AA)
- need to understand how a green economy will address Saskatchewan's commitment to Kyoto and green house gas emissions, carbon sequestration, carbon credits (ACRE); when society as a whole benefits then society as a whole should bear the costs associated (AA)
- environmental farm plans are a good idea (AA)
- focus on innovation and intellectual development (AA)
- we use relatively little pesticide relative to other areas of the world (AA)
- link to healthy people and healthy lifestyles (AA)
- we have to be an exporter (AA). Review the global market place for product development - do market surveys before developing economic initiatives to ensure the market demand is there before the product is developed (AA)
- developing technology is more beneficial than the regulatory approach (AA)
- identify the barriers to making progress and work on these. Example: the railway infrastructure is maintained by private companies and the roads by public taxes; therefore it becomes not as efficient to haul by rail because of the uneven funding - need someone to oversee for the benefit of everyone (AA)
- use the polluter pay principle(AA)
- government needs to demonstrate change from command and control to second generation in order to obtain buy-in from public (ACRE)

Opportunities include:

- focus on value-added resource opportunities (our natural advantage) and build markets for these Saskatchewan goods (AA)
- environmental farm plans will require money; money to fix problems could be offset by incentives for good practices (AA)
- green procurement policy in government would change the way businesses operate and people react (AA)

- diversification of product categories for crops such as flax and canola - potential for complete plant utilization (AA)
- use crop and forest residue to create opportunities such as bioproducts and biodiesel (a community owned refinery in Regina) (AA)
- Agribition and Farm Progress; Saskatoon's biobus (AA)
- there is lots of money in Saskatchewan to invest. Some sort of Provincial Bond market should be set up to guarantee a rate of return for investors (AA)
- look for partners who have access to global markets (AA)
- move towards a national organic standard (AA)
- support for use of GPS systems (cost prohibitive for smaller farmers) - targeted use can decrease the amount of chemical used (AA)
- The Labour Act should be reviewed and reformed (AA)
- regulatory reforms are needed; government to set standards, ensure they are consistent and remain in place; not changing all the time (e.g.: ILOs) (AA)
- government doesn't know all the cumulative impacts and decisions are delayed and/or there is no commitment to make a decision - government should have maximum time lines to deal with development project approvals (community-based organizations don't have the ability to wait out lengthy approvals) (AA)
- new generation co-ops with producer ownership should be promoted - government could participate by developing the market and supporting "new-gen" co-ops (AA)
- demonstration projects (locally and globally), conferences and trade shows are helpful ways educate and learn for the benefit of all Saskatchewan people (e.g.: Zeri-scaping to conserve water, sustainable building conference this fall put on by architects; MEC building in Winnipeg are all good examples) (AA)
- user-pay tax that doesn't go into general revenue goes into "green" initiatives that an independent board oversees (AA)
- test for properties and characterization within new products, research into health e.g. nutrient analysis of various crops - we need to know our product better (micro nutrients) (AA)
- R&D into environmental indicators, provincially, nationally and internationally (AA)
- resource modeling to assist planning on a watershed basis (hog barn example) cumulative impacts (AA)
- centers for recycle materials; recycle plastics (AA)
- nuclear power (AA) (ACRE)

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND UNIVERSITIES

SE and SIR met on October 4, 2004 with the Saskatchewan Research Council (SRC); including the Petroleum Technology Research Centre and the Office of Energy Conservation and met with the University of Regina (U of R) on December 14, 2004.

What we heard:

- we need leadership in order to know where we are going; we need to get from doing a bunch of one-off projects to what we want as a green and prosperous economy (SRC)
- sustainability will take a generational change but we also need to remember society has made huge strides over the past 40 years (U of R)
- without investment by province the shift will only be market driven; may not be the wrong approach; but don't want Saskatchewan to be left out (SRC)
- water quality and water quantity needs to be addressed in a coordinated package including energy conservation (SRC)
- need to determine what innovation cycle we are at for different technologies and think about a green and prosperous economy (SRC)
- take advantage of Saskatchewan opportunities and build on these (agriculture, biomass and oil and gas) (SRC)
- Japan and United States clean coal research will not likely benefit Saskatchewan clean coal needs; will need additional research (SRC)
- make changes for a big group; individuals will follow (e.g.: individuals may not want to do projects, therefore think about bigger economies of scale such as northern housing or subdivision projects) (SRC)
- measures of sustainability will be key and there is a need to monitor (U of R)
- linkages with Aboriginal community (SRC) (U of R)

Opportunities include:

- develop tools, other than regulation, that can be used to foster change (e.g.: tax structures, economic incentives, environmental risk assessment, develop more efficient EIA info and better information management) (SRC)
- build a nuclear reactor to generate radioactive isotopes for medical research; existing reactor is nearing end of operation; these isotopes are flown all over the world (SRC)
- no other jurisdiction in the world has the ability to make, process and dispose of uranium energy, all within its boundaries - nuclear industry would create significant economic opportunities such as: value-added processing, hydrogen processing facilities and U_2 waste management - need to educate public (SRC)
- water is key: look at how water is used and help people adapt to water shortages (SRC); opportunities in water treatment and wastewater management (U of R)
- SARCAN and IPSCO type recycling opportunities - organic and combustible (paper/cardboard) make up ½ half of waste - focus on these (SRC)
- volume of municipal waste in Regina and Saskatoon might allow for a gasification project (SRC)
- could farming become a net energy producer rather than net energy user by developing associated wind power and/or biodiesal/ethanol opportunities; using the funds to clean up hog barn wastes/etc., to the benefit of environment; develop a green economy (SRC)

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

SE and GRAA hosted a workshop with municipal leaders, Communities of Tomorrow, SUMA, Craik and the Craik Sustainable Living Project on July 20, 2004

What we heard:

- behaviour change is critical and we need people to change: key is to figure out where to step in
- there is a need to think about community as more than the infrastructure
- Communities of Tomorrow survey found the level of knowledge of sustainability is not that high and that inner-city restoration is number one issue
- disincentives and lack of regulation to force change are real issues
- a process for communities to be able to assess the benefits from adopting sustainable practices is needed
- education and communication developed to encourage change from the ground up
- communities need support to encourage improvement; includes horizontal and vertical linkages and correct policies
- develop a vision so Saskatchewan people know where we are going and create an interface among governments in this regard
- to make change we need to work at neighborhood level
- large municipalities know they have to pay for future development, but small communities won't be on the same page
- future of urban Aboriginal population is key, in fact cultural sustainability is key
- City of Saskatoon is planning new neighborhoods using Smart Growth Concepts, but often the public want something different
- communities that have been poor environmentalists shouldn't get funding at the expense of communities that have been good stewards
- need to remember rural folks consider themselves as a community (whether from a town or country); cost to maintain rural life and ecological footprint in a rural economy is higher
- need to recognize early adopters of change (example: raising landfill rates may send waste to unlicensed rural landfills) - we need a strong coordinated effort to assist with these initiatives
- land use planning is a municipal responsibility and cities have first-rate staff developing plans and province has junior staff approving (it is an issue of respect)
- current lack of enforcement resources within SE, particularly if we go to a non-regulatory environment
- provincial government is sending mixed messages green policy but SaskWater is hindering progress on water distribution/management
- provincial government needs to be part of the municipal process (e.g., creating homes for Aboriginal folks, handling environmental issues, seeking solutions for neighborhoods before social services is required)
- decisions should be made using full cost accounting
- look for economies of scale

Opportunities include:

- other jurisdictions use integrated planning and institutions to support sustainability, a provincial initiative would be a way to lead by example - develop a template that includes federal and municipal pieces in that process
- Province's job is to work on behaviour/value; change in language that folks understand
- there is a need to coordinate efforts across government, including legislation/policy review, that leads to more sustainable response
- there have been 81 recommendations for improvement to The Planning and Development Act but nothing has happened (need realistic goals) - streamline processes contemplated in Planning and Development Act; then allow cities to concentrate on planning
- provincial government currently micro-manages building regulations but doesn't provide land use planning assistance
- enabling legislation to provide for development of waste management authorities
- government to develop a paint stewardship program to recycle paint products
- include green house gas reduction targets and a corresponding education program